

COMMISSIONERS PROCEEDINGS  
DECEMBER 2, 2003  
CLARK COUNTY, WASHINGTON

The Board convened in the Commissioners' Hearing Room, 6th Floor, Public Service Center, 1300 Franklin Street, Vancouver, Washington. Commissioners Morris, Stanton, and Pridemore, Chair, present.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Commissioners conducted the Flag Salute.

BID AWARD 2352

Reconvened a public hearing for Bid Award 2352 – UV Lamps to Process and Disinfect Waste Water. Mike Westerman, General Services, read a memo from General Services requesting that Bid 2352 be awarded to lowest responsive bidder meeting all specifications. There being no public comment, **MOVED** by Stanton to award Bid 2352 to WM.H. Riley Co. in the total bid amount of \$115,488.86 including Washington State Sales Tax and grant authority for the County Administrator to sign all bid related contracts. Commissioners Pridemore, Morris, and Stanton voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 50)

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment.

CONSENT AGENDA

There being no public comment, **MOVED** by Stanton to approve consent items 1 through 17. Commissioners Pridemore, Morris, and Stanton voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 50)

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION

Held a public hearing to consider 2003/2004 Re-adoption Supplemental Appropriation within various operating and capital funds in the amount of \$40,257,046 and setting 2004 tax levies – Conservation Futures, Mental Health, Road Fund, Property Tax, and to consider recommendations regarding relevant Elected Officials' salaries.

*Jim Dickman*, Office of Budget, summarized the supplemental. He said it included a \$40.3 million expenditure increase of which was \$13.4 million in new revenue offsets and \$5.9 million of administrative charges for a net increase of \$21 million. He said the supplemental does not include any cuts or reduction to Community Services and actually reduces the cost to the department – indirects and technology. Dickman said less would be collected from Community Services than what was adopted.

*Morris* explained indirects. She said there would be significant changes in the way funding streams for Human Services flow and will be more at the state and federal level. Problems at this time are internal departmental problems and are not a part of the proposal in front of the board this day.

*Mike Piper*, Community Services Director, said the entire administrative budget is limited by the fund sources from the federal and state sources so there is insufficient money to cover the overhead costs.

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Mr. Piper stated that he has a short-time strategy to continue to fund the programs, extend the contracts for at least three months until there is a more precise proposal in order to remedy the long term situation. He said he wanted to notify the contractors as soon as possible and apologized to the non-profit partners because it was sudden.

*Pridemore* said for 2004, not 2005 or 2006, there is a \$1.5 million deficit in the county's general fund now with this supplemental.

*Dennis Cole* said at a meeting of the Human Services Executive Coalition representing a number of key area non-profits who provide human services with and for the county, the proposed cuts were discussed. He said the cuts will significantly reduce or eliminate services to thousands of people in Clark County. The agencies are unable to accept the cuts and resulting reduction in key core services. They hope to work with the County. He said it was unclear what the proposed cuts are. The process to this date has failed to involve the agencies most impacted by the cuts. They are supportive of the out of the box and creative thinking of the leadership. They have not heard the results of the Moss Adam's study. They would like to be a part of the solution and have not been considered as such. Who will support core services, if not the county?

*Beverly Robinson* supported Mr. Cole's comments about impact on systems and what that means on the community at large. De-funding the community response to the homeless will dismantle a system of care and referral that has taken over a decade to build in this community and we will begin to see a flood of individuals unable to access services that will impact the already understaffed ability to respond. Often this results in crisis management which is a more expensive way to deliver services in the long run. She said the YWCA is looking at reducing services to women and children beyond the emergency shelter. Robinson encouraged the time that allows them to discuss the impact of the reductions on the agencies and look at other creative and thoughtful ways to provide services.

*John McDonagh*, a volunteer member of the Board of Directors for SHARE, was disappointed that the cuts will come an entire year earlier than expected and had no opportunity to address it. Needs are growing at an unprecedented rate, and cuts would be devastating. He looks forward to participating in creating a solution.

*Pridemore* said even if there is a slight delay, this issue is still very valid. He said following the voters initiatives over the last several years, the board has been cutting the fat and inefficiencies in county government and has said repeatedly that there is a brick wall at some point before the board – they have no taxing authority to increase revenues, so have to cut back on programs. He said it was important to notify the state legislature and the people of Clark County.

*McDonagh* thought the Board could aid the agencies in that effort in getting the message to the legislature.

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*Jeri Shumate*, Director of Guideline, 211 Info, formerly known as Information and Referral, said she proposes that the voices of the non-profit be solicited for conversations in how to do social services better. She encouraged that choices made now look at the timing issue. Shumate said there has been federal legislation introduced that could provide 50% of the operational costs of 211 as early as about 2005 that requires a local match. Non-profits are willing to work together to think outside the box.

*David Cooper*, ARC of Clark County, explained his organization and said working together may find some solutions that may not be readily apparent without a team effort.

*J.R. Yoseph* handed out prepared comments, including access to justice, the role of the county in providing access to justice to its citizens and pleaded to find a way to provide this essential service to the constituency in the immediate future. He presented history and said the county needs a can do attitude with adequate resources being found to fund Superior Court immediately. He submitted, last week, a 180 attorney signed petition supporting the judicial positions authorized by the state. He presented examples of cases in the system. Yoseph asked the Board to find the small sum of money to remedy the situation, examine the budget with a keen eye and fulfill the Board's obligation to the constituency by enabling and empowering access to justice. He pleaded for fulfilling the mandated estate and authorize two judges, department 9 and 10 of the Superior Court.

*Morris* said she was sympathetic to the request of a Superior Court judge but also took exception to the remark early about surely with a budget as large as our general fund we could find money for a judge. She said nothing is ever simple. \$580,000 worth of general funds cuts is what the Board is talking about in Community Services, so coming up with \$150,000 for another judge is not a simple matter.

*Stanton* said that as she understands it, it's the state's obligation to provide for the courts at this level, and before they even knew the term unfunded mandates we got that unfunded mandate that the county would pick up a half of the costs. She didn't feel the state has done its part. Stanton hoped that Yoseph would take some of his passion and anger to the state level and ask the state to fund what it is they mandate the county to do.

*Yoseph* said he was passionate, but not angry. He said what he sees on a daily basis transpiring in the Superior Court in Clark County is not right. When prioritizing, what could be more important than access to justice.

*Stanton* said there are people who would argue that if we don't fund the human services aspect adequately, it puts more of a burden on the courts and the law enforcement officials that we also pay out of the general fund, the corrections system, and everything else that becomes a part of it. She said she heard what Mr. Yoseph said and is sympathetic with the need and knew the Clark County judges carry the heaviest work load in the state. They are very efficient, wonderful group of people, and she agreed with Yoseph's goal of trying to get them reasonable case loads. Stanton said to the Board it has come

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down to what level of service is affordable given all the reductions that the citizens have seen fit to put upon the county through initiatives passed at the state level.

*Pridemore* said they are looking at \$100 million general fund, they are looking a \$1.5 million that must be cut somewhere in the general fund budget now or next year for certain. The easy cuts are gone now, and \$1.5 million will be extremely difficult. *Pridemore* did believe the Superior Court system was underfunded and does need these judges and has been the area the Board of Commissioners has put as much priority on as they can. Unfortunately, the Board is not looking at allocating additional resources these days -- they are looking at allocating cuts. *Pridemore* said they will keep the Superior Court and District Court systems, hopefully, completely away from that.

*Yoseph* said Superior Court has not been keeping pace for a long time. They will not be able to keep up the pace of performance. *Yoseph* said Clark County judges are one of the hardest working benches in the state.

*Pridemore* said he didn't know of any county program in the past five years that has kept pace, so it will be a challenge.

*Patricia deVargas-Walker*, 902 Esther Street, with Catholic Community Services, said they have had major cuts at the state and federal level for mental health services, drug and alcohol services, and other kinds of services. They are getting the social services needs from the State of Oregon, as their systems collapse. She has met many, many times with the legislators and still have not seen any changes. She appealed to the Board to have Catholic Community Services be a part of the discussions that are necessary for the balancing of the budget and help us help those people who are the very most vulnerable.

*Judge Robert Harris* addressed the request for the funding of judicial department #9. He presented history and stats. He said the work load is not manageable, and they need assistance and help. *Harris* asked for a position this year, \$160,000 for entire year. He suggested a compromise that if the position was effective the 23<sup>rd</sup> month, November, it would cost about \$40,000 and a commitment that this position would be filled in 2005 and that resources would be available. *Harris* said there was an ill judge, so cases are stacked up more. He said the emphasis would be on criminal and non-civil. Case loads will have to be capped, and levels will have to be provided for the judges. He talked about some areas where there will have to be changes.

*Morris* asked if *Harris* was contemplating, if the Board was to approve the proposal, an election of a new judge in November. She thanked him for his work on the statewide committee and offered help from the Budget Office.

*Harris* said it would be an appointment with an election the following fall, 2005.

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*Pridemore* said the court system was the number two priority, and they have done an outstanding job working with the Board. He did worry that if the Community Development programs are cut back, will there still be more demands on the Superior Court side.

*Harris* said in the last year there has been an increase in the area of mental health. They are interrelated, are factored in, and trigger the case load.

*Morris* said the courts have done a fine job of working cooperatively with social services dealing with some of these really difficult human problems.

*Judge Barbara Johnson* encouraged Board flexibility and consideration of the exceptions. They have worked with Glenn Olson. She said the judges have been somewhat conservative in their requests. Johnson acknowledged the social services agencies' very important services. She said the dependency area is a critical area, and a rushed decision, or a decision that is not fully informed, is a critical concern for having adequate time to make quality decisions.

*Commissioner Scott Collier* explained the humanistic side in the dependency caseload. He said time spent on cases is practically non-existent because they are switched from quality judicial work to quantity. They are handling 30% – 40% more per judicial officer than any other county in the state. He said it can't go on any longer, and we, as a community, do not deserve to be so underfunded and underserved to the citizens' needs.

*Pridemore* asked Collier to express his concerns for the citizens who may not feel like this is important to them – why is this important to a taxpayer?

*Collier* said the impact is far greater than one might think – when you start talking about the hundreds in dependencies, grandparents, divorce cases impacting parents and children – when you take the numbers and multiplying them out.

*Pridemore* said the issue is, what does it mean to the average citizen? He said it does have tremendous impacts on our community, even those not directly involved in a court case, and it is extremely important to get that message out.

*Collier* said the 9<sup>th</sup> position is exclusively a civil position dealing with civil litigation. The citizens impacted are the most needy, as well as those that are our best sources of revenue – the taxpayer. It said the decision will come back to the Board of Commissioners.

*Pridemore* did not agree. Only citizens can change the course.

*Stanton* said the Board doesn't have the authority to generate new revenues. The Board will have to go to the public through initiatives with a question on the ballot for additional taxes. If they understand why,

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what it goes for, and that these are very real needs in our community, then it will be easier to get approved.

*Pridemore* thought the citizens did not want to see these types of cuts happen and have a broader vision and greater desire to support the community and quality of life, however, it is important to get the word out.

*Stanton* said there will be \$360,000 total additional property taxes generated next year.

*Pridemore* said tax revenues are going up at least the level of inflation, so we are in a pace of constantly cutting every year.

*Morris* asked about the next supplemental appropriation and if the position was funded in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> month next year, when would that happen.

*Dickman* said there is a supplemental appropriation anticipated in January 2004.

*Judge Harris* said June would probably be the latest date for a decision. Governor Lock would interview the candidates for his final selection process.

*Morris* said there were many competing needs, not just the courts and Community Development. She said the Board would be deliberative about the decision.

[BREAK]

Reconvened.

*John Grenolder*, Director of Open House Ministries, 900 W. 12<sup>th</sup> Street, said Open House Ministries does not receive funding from the county – it represents the ripple effect. He said he couldn't do his work in isolation. He said strategy is important and cuts will effect the long term picture and affect groups that do not receive funds from the county.

*Cheryl Pfaff*, Chair of the Council for the Homeless, said they were just one piece that face homelessness in the community. She said the loss of funding to the Council would be devastating to the community, the homeless, and low income people served. She said these cuts are coming at a period of time with more people at risk than ever who are seeking services from non-profit, space reduced donations. Pfaff said at least 600 more people, most of them in families with children, are homeless this year than last year. She spoke about the services the Council provides. She thanked the Board and stated that they would like to help in any way they can to be part of the solution.

*Pridemore* asked how much the Council for the Homeless receives from the county now.

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*Pfaff* said she couldn't tell the total amount received, but believed they would lose \$73,000.

*Pridemore* said \$36,000 from this community to support the Council for the Homeless programs costs each citizen less than ten cents a year.

*Father Rankin*, 11510 NW 35 Avenue, member of the Community Action Advisory Board, and speaking on behalf of that group, said he was surprised to read in the newspaper of the impending cuts and was disturbed that the advisory board had not had a chance to discuss priorities. He said the advisory board could look at the administrative costs to see if looking at a system where not so much burden was placed upon the community action part of the program to see if they can recover a few dollars. He hoped that people that care for others can be fostered in the best way. He said he did not see a list of priorities in the county at this point and without it the helping agencies will be pitted against the other, and he hoped that process can be avoided. Rankin suggested looking at goals and spending wisely.

*Pridemore and Stanton* spoke about grants being specific for very specific purposes. Morris said the efforts for accountability have become very, very expensive.

*Bill Robison*, 900 Washington Street representing the Clark County Bar Association and the Clark County Volunteer Lawyers, said the people who vote have to be addressed. He said when revenues are cut, we cut into the ability of people, like the volunteer lawyers, to assist hundreds and hundreds of people at an extremely low cost to the government. It will cost more.

*Phillisha Manning*, 1008 X Street, a chairperson of the Community Action Advisory Board and a low income representative, thanked the community services non-profits for the services because it is needed in the our community. She asked the Board to think about finding the money somewhere else – not cutting the services for the low income people.

*Joanne McBride*, County Clerk, said she didn't think people realize how much we ask county to give to the community and it's sad that these cuts have to be taken, but we are all suffering budget cuts. She thanked the Board for the appropriation that is needed just to simply keep her office running.

*Pridemore* said the elected officials have done a remarkable job in managing their costs.

*Morris* said that the amount of additional money that the Board will be levying in 2004, over 2003, for the General Fund is \$398,064. Today, just keeping the services that are in the room now from Community Services and adding one needed judge, is three or four times the amount of money that we will be allowed under law to levy. The county level rate continues to drop as a result of the 101% limit. She said we live in a complex time and have complex demands and constraints. Because of the teamwork from our elected officials, we have been able to manage so far.

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*Pridemore* added that the \$398,064 is not adjusted for inflation, so if you take it in the terms of real dollars the impact is significantly greater -- then if you spread it over a per capita, most of the service areas in the general fund, the costs are directly related to population growth. So, on a per capita basis the change in the tax burden has been far more profound than most citizens are aware of.

*Bill Barron* clarified that he will take the Board's comments as direction that the letter that was sent to the human services agencies that the contracts would be closing on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December, 2003 will not take place as noted in the letter, but rather that by March 31, 2004, we will have a more deliberate involved discussion relative to these cuts that the Board has outlined today.

*Stanton* added that the Community Advisory Board would be included in the discussion.

*Pridemore* said all advisory boards need to be involved in the discussion.

The Board closed public comment.

*Stanton* said the County has made tremendous adjustments in terms of finding new ways to be more efficient, work with others, and reorganize. She thanked the department heads along with elected officials. She said the cuts were not the only option, but we need to put together a plan as "how to" to the citizens since they asked for us to come back and get their permission for property tax vote or sales tax vote, or whatever it would take to fill the difference. We'll need to go to the voters.

*Pridemore* said the kinds of cuts moving towards now are ones that will clearly have an impact on citizens.

*Morris* said on the agenda today was an increment in elected officials' salaries which seemed totally inappropriate given the morning.

*Pridemore* said the Salary Committee that the Board appointed in 2000 did increase the salary of County Commissioner #3 so the District 3 Commissioner's salary will go up a thousand dollars in 2004, 2005, and 2006 as a matter of equity.

*Bill Barron* said the board would be equitable for 2004.

*Pridemore* said elected officials salaries will be further discussed before it comes back on the public agenda.

**MOVED** by Morris to approve 2003-12-01, 2003-12-02, 2003-12-03, and 2003-12-05. Commissioners Morris, Stanton, and Pridemore voted aye. Motion carried. (See tape 51).



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PUBLIC HEARING: 2004-2009 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Held a public hearing to consider adoption of the Transportation Improvement Program for 2004-2009 and the 2004 Annual Construction Program.

Robin Krause, Transportation Programming, presented the staff report. He presented the following percentages: County Road Fund 32%, Traffic Impact Fees 13%, State Grants 19%, Federal Grants 16%, other 7%, and the Public Works Trust Fund loans 11%. 2004 is an aggressive construction program of just over \$29 million and funded by outside sources. He presented projects. Krause said next year TIP process will begin with consideration of a new Capital Facilities Plan and what that might mean for Public Works and will have work sessions, as well as public outreach program starting early next year.

There being no public comment, **MOVED** by Stanton to approve 2003-12-06 and 2003-12-07. Commissioners Pridemore, Morris, and Stanton voted aye. Motion carried. (See tape 51)

PUBLIC HEARING: CLARK COUNTY PUBLIC FACILITIES DISTRICT

Held a public hearing to consider:

1. To consider the determination by the Clark County Public Facilities District (PFD) to approve a contract with Coffman Construction to perform demolition of buildings and site preparation for the Fairgrounds Exposition Center Project.
2. To consider determinations by Clark County Public Facilities District (PFD) to (1) Utilize the Alternative Public Works Contracting Procedures of Chapter 39.10 RCW, (2) Authorize Clark County Department of General Services to act as agent for the PFD for preparing and receiving documents related to the alternative Public Works contracting, and (3) Negotiate with Hoffman Construction to act as the General Contractor/Construction Manager for the Fairgrounds Exposition Center Project.

*Bronson Potter*, Prosecuting Attorney's Office, presented information. The low bidder for the site demolition and site preparation for the area where the exhibit center would be constructed -- the first phase of the Fairground Master Plan facility -- was Coffman Construction, \$460,000. Hoffman Construction was identified as the General Contractor Construction Manager for the exhibition itself. If the project is in the best interest of the county, there is a resolution to sign. He said we have to start construction on the project by the end of December. Potter said the city is hopeful to have their bonds issued by the end of the month.

*Doug Johnston*, General Services, said the timeline is running close, and the contractor is waiting for a phone call with a notice to proceed. Knocking a building down does not constitute start of construction -- installing utility lines, etc. is what initiates starting construction, so the buildings need to be out of the way.

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There being no public comment, **MOVED** by Morris to approve Resolution 2003-12-08.  
Commissioners Pridemore, Morris, and Stanton voted aye. Motion carried. (See Tape 51).

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*2:00 p.m. Bid Opening*

In Attendance: Louise Richards, Clerk of the Board; Mike Westerman, General Services

BID OPENING 2353

Held a public hearing for Bid Opening 2353 - NE 149<sup>th</sup> Street Public Works Rock Storage Facility.  
Mike Westerman, General Services, said the opening of Bid 2353 has been delayed until December 16, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Hearing Room of the Clark County Public Service Center, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor. (See Tape 52).

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Craig A. Pridemore/s/  
Craig A. Pridemore, Chair

Betty Sue Morris/s/  
Betty Sue Morris, Commissioner

Judie Stanton, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Louise Richards/s/  
Clerk of the Board

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